

**James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, June 20, 1809.
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TO THOMAS JEFFERSON. MAD. MSS.

Washington, June 20, 1809.

Dear Sir, —Yours of the 16th came to hand yesterday. I hope you have not made any sacrifice of any sort to the scruple which has superseded my arrangemt. with Mr. Barnes. The execution of it would have been equally accorded with my disposition and my conveniency.

The Gazette of yesterday contains the mode pursued for reanimating confidence in the pledge of the B. Govt given by Mr Erskine in his arrangement with this Govt. The puzzle created by the order of April struck every one.¹ E. assures us that his

¹ The order revoked the old orders except so far as a blockade would accomplish their object. The blockade extended from Ems on the north and included the northern ports of Italy, but opened to neutral commerce all ports not actually French. Erskine wrote to Secretary Smith:

“ Sir, “ Washington, June 15, 1809.

“I have the Honor to inclose a Copy of an Order of His Majesty in Council, issued on the 26th of April last.

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"In consequence of official Communications sent to me from His Majesty's Government, since the Adoption of that measure, I am enabled to assure you that it has no Connection whatever with the Overtures, which I have been authorized to make to the Government of the United States, and that I am persuaded that the Terms of the Agreement so happily concluded by the recent Negotiation, will be strictly fulfilled on the part of His Majesty.

"The internal Evidence of the Order itself, would fully justify the foregoing Construction and moreover, it will not have escaped your Notice that the Repeal has not thereby been made of the Order of the 7th of January 1807, which according to the Engagement I have entered into, on the part of His Majesty, is to be abrogated with the other Orders, in consequence of the Adjustment of Differences between the two Countries, and the confidence entertained of a further conciliatory understanding.

"I have the Honor," &c.— *D. of S. MSS. Notes.*

Govt was under such impressions as to the views of this, that not the slightest expectation existed of our fairly meeting its overtures, and that the last order was considered as a seasonable mitigation

of the tendency of a failure of the experiment. This explanation seems as extraordinary as the alternatives it shews. The fresh declarations of Mr. E. seem to have quieted the distrust, which was becoming pretty strong; but has not destroyed the effect of the ill grace stamped on the British retreat, and of the commercial rigor evinced by the new and insidious duties stated in the newspapers. It may be expected, I think, that the B. Govt will fulfil what its Minister has stipulated; and that if it means to be trickish, it will frustrate the proposed negotiation, and then say their orders were not permanently repealed, but only withdrawn, *in the mean time.*

The only question likely now to agitate Congs will be on the Bill which opens our ports to *French* as well as B. *ships of war.* The Senate have passed it *unanimously.* Whether the

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Feds were sincere, or wished the debate, &c., to take place in the H. of R, remains to be seen.

Yrs truly